

# **Dolphin – Fishery Interaction Workshop II**

**Raleigh, North Carolina**

**July 11 – 12, 2001**

**A Report to NOAA Fisheries**

**Prepared by**

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## **Introduction**

The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) requires the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce, acting through the National Marine Fisheries Service, to develop and implement a take reduction plan designed to assist in the recovery or prevent the depletion of each strategic stock which interacts with a Category I or II fishery.

In a letter to invitees to the first workshop held on May 15 – 16, 2001, Acting Regional Administrator Joseph Powers wrote: “The coastal stock of the Atlantic bottlenose dolphin has been designated as a strategic stock both as a result of its depleted designation under the MMPA and because its Potential Biological Removal is exceeded by mortalities in several fisheries, including: the mid-Atlantic coastal gillnet fishery, the North Carolina inshore gillnet fishery, the southeastern Atlantic shark gillnet fishery, the South Atlantic coastal gillnet fishery, the North Carolina stop net and long haul seine fisheries, the mid-Atlantic haul/beach seine fishery, the Atlantic blue crab trap/pot fishery and the mid-Atlantic pound net fishery.”

Invitees were requested to attend two workshops to share data and other information relative to bottlenose dolphin/fishery interactions in advance of the formation of a Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Team.

The first of the two planned information-sharing workshops covered Take Reduction Team basics, bottlenose dolphin stock structure and bottlenose dolphin abundance. The workshop also provided opportunities for public comment. The workshop was held at the Sheraton Atlantic Beach Hotel in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina, on May 15 and 16, 2001. Dr. Kathy Wang of the Protected Resources Division, Southeast Regional Office of NOAA Fisheries chaired the workshop. The workshop facilitators were Hans Neuhauser and Jim Feldt of the Georgia Environmental Policy Institute. A final report on the first workshop was distributed to NOAA Fisheries on May 30, 2001 and subsequently to invited participants.

The second workshop to share data and other information covered general biology of bottlenose dolphins, updates on stock structure, abundance and potential biological removal, bottlenose dolphin mortality and fishery characterizations. Again, the workshop provided opportunities for public comment. The workshop was held at the Raleigh-Durham Airport Holiday Inn in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina on July 11 and 12, 2001. Again, Dr. Kathy Wang of the Protected Resources Division, Southeast Regional Office of NOAA Fisheries chaired the workshop. The workshop facilitators were Hans Neuhauser and Jim Feldt of the Georgia Environmental Policy Institute. This report provides information on the second workshop.

## **Invited Participants**

Letters of invitation from NOAA Fisheries were sent to a total of 41 people. Of these, 19 are commercial fishermen, 1 is a recreational fisherman, 5 are scientists, 3 represent non-governmental conservation organizations, 3 represent fishery management councils and commissions, 9 represent state agencies, and 1 represents the Marine Mammal Commission.

### **Workshop Attendees**

A total of 56 people registered as attending the workshop. Of these, 29 were invited participants (71% attendance), seven were presenters, two were facilitators and 18 were observers. Attendees are listed in Appendix 1.

### **Materials distributed**

#### **Workshop information**

Workshop agenda

Expense reimbursement form for invited participants

List of invited participants planning to attend the workshop (see appendix 1 for corrected list)

#### **Documents related to: 1<sup>st</sup> Dolphin-Fishery Interaction Workshop, 15-16 May 2001 Atlantic Beach, NC**

Comments from the Atlantic Scientific Review Group, April 26, 2000 (R. S. Wells)

Summary of bottlenose dolphins stranded along the Atlantic coast of the US

Spatial distribution of bottlenose dolphin sightings in aerial surveys – Powerpoint reprints (L. Garrison)

Summer abundance estimates Mid-Atlantic US continental shelf – Powerpoint reprints (L. Garrison et al)

Northeast abundance surveys – Powerpoint reprints (D. Palka)

Explanation of PBR – Powerpoint reprints (D. Palka)

Comparison of survey results and best estimates of abundance – Powerpoint reprints (D. Palka)

Genetic analysis of stock structure of coastal bottlenose dolphins in the northwest Atlantic – Powerpoint reprints (P. E. Rosel)

Genetic and spatial analysis of the degree of overlap between coastal and offshore bottlenose dolphins in the northwest Atlantic – Powerpoint reprints (P. E. Rosel)

Stock structure of coastal bottlenose dolphins, *Tursiops truncatus*, along the U.S. Atlantic coast – Powerpoint reprints (A. A. Hohn)

Management by stock: review of legislation and policy – Powerpoint reprints (A. A. Hohn)

Photo-identification and the Mid-Atlantic bottlenose dolphin central catalog (MABDC) – Powerpoint reprints (K. Urrian)

Revised SEC aerial survey abundance estimates (L. Garrison)

Coastal stock(s) of Atlantic bottlenose dolphin: status review and management: Proceedings and recommendations from a workshop held in Beaufort, North Carolina, 13-14 September 1993 – reprint (K. R. Wang et al)

Gross evidence of human-caused mortality in small cetaceans – reprint (A. J. Reed et al)

Coastal bottlenose dolphin mortality in the directed shark gillnet fishery (L. Garrison)

Requests from the May 2001 workshop – follow-up

**Documents related to: 2nd Dolphin-Fishery Interaction Workshop, 11-12 July 2001  
Raleigh, NC**

Initial workshop of gear modification options to reduce the mortality of bottlenose dolphins in fishing gear – draft meeting summary

Comparison of 1996 – 2000 bycatch of coastal bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) in U.S. Mid-Atlantic gillnet fisheries as estimated by the ratio, delta-distribution, and log-linear regression methods (M. Rossman et al)

The dolphin dieoff: long-term effects and recovery of the population – reprint (G. P. Scott et al)

Mortality estimates for Atlantic bottlenose dolphin in the directed shark fishery of Florida and Georgia (L. Garrison)

Draft conservation plan for the western North Atlantic stock of bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) – reprint (D. A. Pabst et al)

Characterization of North Carolina commercial fisheries with occasional interactions with marine mammals – reprint (C. Steve et al)

Gear characteristics of Mid-Atlantic gillnet hauls that catch bottlenose dolphins (D. Palka)

Summary of bottlenose dolphin strandings along the Atlantic coast of the U.S. 1997 – 1999

Mid-Atlantic Take Reduction Team recommendations pertaining to bottlenose dolphins

Summary of bottlenose dolphin strandings from New York to Virginia (D. Palka et al)

Characterization of bottlenose dolphin strandings in North Carolina, 1997 – 2000

Proposed bottlenose dolphin take reduction team

Meeting minutes of the ALWTRT Mid-Atlantic Subgroup, Alexandria, VA, August 25, 2000

ALWTRT Mid-Atlantic sub-group meeting recommendations to NMFS, Alexandria, VA, August 25, 2000

Maryland Chesapeake Bay haul seine harvest

### **Other handouts and materials**

Bottlenose dolphin biology overhead reprints (J. Reynolds)

Preliminary stock structure of coastal bottlenose dolphins along the Atlantic coast of the US – replacement pages July 2001 (SEFSC staff)

Summary of abundance estimates for coastal *Tursiops* for waters between New York and Florida during 1995 to 2000 (D. Palka et al.)

Bottlenose dolphin abundance estimates using strip transect encounter rates (L. Garrison et al)

Potential Biological Removal estimates (D. Palka)

ASMFC Atlantic coastal fisheries characterization database – Marine mammal interactions sorted by species, gear type & state

Blue crab and shad fishery descriptions - Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
Coastal Resources Division

New Jersey gill net fishery for Atlantic mackerel (and other species)

Look out for commercial fishing gear! – New Jersey Sea Grant

S.E. Florida shark drift gill net buy out proposal (S. M. Baker)

### **Comments by Invited Participants and Observers**

At the end of each day of the workshop, both invited participants and observers were invited to submit comments.

#### **Comments submitted July 11, 2001**

“One more suggestion from Sue Barco about information that would be good for the group to have early on in the TRT process.

Characteristics of all gear (esp. net) removed from stranded *Tursiops* from NJ ? Central FL (esp. VA & NC)

Stranding networks send gear retrieved off stranded critters to NMFS. Those gear can add info to the observed take data. I know there are at least 3 pieces of net from VA over the past 5 years, probably more from NC.”

#### **Comments submitted July 12, 2001**

*Editor’s note: Items in brackets [ ] are the editor’s best estimate of the word. Emphases in the text are in the original.*

“Sue Barco

Suggestion 1:

Regarding the northern limit of the winter mixed stock:

Stranding data, observer data and opportunistic sightings suggest that bottlenose dolphins occur in the coastal waters of southeastern VA outside of the seasonal ‘summer’ season.

Perhaps the winter northern limit of the mixed stocks should be moved north to Chesapeake Bay to reflect a geographically similar coastline more recognizable as a biological unit than a political state line boundary (VA/NC state border).

A similar change may be appropriate for the summer northern limit of the NNC management unit.

Suggestion 2:

Analyze VA & NC stranding data together since the stranding data & FI-YES data are complimentary seasonally.

Suggestion 3:

Re-analyze 1987 – 88 stranding data in comparison to 5 years average post-event and compare it with 5 year average pre-event.

Suggestion 4:

To determine abundance from the strip surveys in NC do not assume that density within 2 km of shore is the same within the entire 12 km ‘coastal’ region. Opportunistic observations do not support this.”

“Public comments – Rick Marks

Comments/Requests July 11 – 12 meeting

Information was not received in advance of the meeting, as requested

All constituents from NJ to FLA appointed to the TRT must be informed ASAP regarding the upcoming Sept [meeting]

How will the mortality, abundance and PBR estimates be reviewed and on what schedule?

Respectfully request further clarification of the bycatch mortality estimate

Respectfully request the group be provided with Virginia Marine Science Museum survey data

“ “ “ “ “ “ [with] actual location of biopsy samples

Bycatch mortality estimates must reflect fish harvest reductions resulting from fishery mgmt plan regulations.

Comments on Info Requested from May 15 - 16 meeting

We did not receive a copy of the BND conservation plan

We did not receive copies of SRG’s schedule to review the 4 mgmt unit approach



We were not provided with research needs for NMFS scientists

We requested copies of the SRG documents related to abundance and survey methodology – is the April 26, 2000 3 page memo the full extent of the SRG review?

Thank you for the info that was provided.”

## **Appendix 1**

### **Participants and Presenters**

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